Plein Air Painting: Exploring the Environment (ART 241)

Please email instructor, once enrolled, prior to the start of class to discuss materials tailored for you. Feel free to use oils, acrylics, watercolor, gouache or mixed media. Beginners welcome. Note that Outside Assignments are mandatory for a letter grade, optional otherwise. Note that three locations are off-campus, so please allow extra time for travel on those days (latecomers welcome).

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Course Objectives:
1. To understand the impact of mark-making through our bodies and our natural gesture.
2. To use sighting, light logic, and atmospheric perspective to create natural, realistic paintings.
3. To explore emotive reactions in paint to changes in environment and changing light.
4. To use formal and conceptual analysis in the critique of artwork, as distinguished from the internalized critique which labels things as “good” or “bad.”

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS
(Note: all outside assignments are due the following class. Outside assignments may be altered on an individual basis, based on previous experience or interest.)

WEEK 1 GATHERING
MEET AT CACTUS GARDEN, STANFORD
Materials: of your choice but surface (canvas or paper) should be no larger than 8” x 10.”
**In class:** Introductions, syllabus and material overview, assignments overview, basic color theory, how to “stretch color.” **Micro painting.** For this “Micro” painting, your chosen subject should literally fit into your canvas, in a 1:1 ratio, allowing a deeper investigation into color and form.

**Outside Assignments (2):** 1) Return to Cactus Garden and finish your “Micro” painting. 2) Jar Painting or Drawing. Instructions: fill a clear jar (or cup, can make a lid out of plastic wrap and a rubber band). Fill to the brim with items gathered from nature or not!, adding anything you like to make sure it is stuffed full. Shake it to make sure it doesn’t move. Look carefully at the jar for an interesting composition, then tape off a rectangle conforming to the dimensions of your page, and paint or draw what you see. Materials: any!

**WEEK 2  ARCHITECTURE  MEET AT STANFORD ART GALLERY BUILDING, in the arcade (covered walkway) on the left. Address: 419 Lasuen Mall, Stanford.**

**Additional materials:** Small box, preferably larger than a matchbox (your toolbox should be fine), sketchbook and pencil. **Viewfinder** (see materials at end).

**In class:** Discussion of assignments, basic color theory, Sighting, 1-Point and 2-Point linear perspective, atmospheric perspective, brush grips, uses of complementary color. **Painting of arcade with arches.**

**Outside Assignment:** Take a photo of a room in your home (cell phone photos are fine!) in 1-point **OR** 2-point perspective. Print it out (using a regular printer), 8” x 10.” Glue that photo to your paper or canvas (Acrylic matte or gloss medium works well), and paint right on top of your print-out, using any medium. Surface should also be 8” x 10”. Be sure to use appropriate brush sizes. **Note: if using oil or acrylic, please coat first with clear Acrylic (Gloss or Matte) Medium.**

**WEEK 3  PEOPLE, PART 1: Stillness  MEET IN RODIN SCULPTURE GARDEN, NEXT TO CANTOR MUSEUM**

**Materials:** Your choice for painting, but don’t forget your viewfinder! Sketchbook, vine charcoal (skinny and big) and charcoal pencils.

**In class:** Gesture drawings in sketchbook, painting of Rodin statue.

**Outside Assignment:** Paint your hand or foot, any size, being careful to first make arcs from knuckle to knuckle, seeking bone and tendon within. Any size, any medium.

**WEEK 4  THE OCEAN  MEET AT SAN GREGORIO STATE BEACH** (on the PCH (Rte 1), just past the intersection with the 84. Parking is $8 cash, free parking on a first come-first served basis on a dirt patch on the 84, just before Rte 1)
**Additional materials:** flashlight, towel. Wear layers of clothing. Gather in parking lot.

**In class:** Multiple options at this beach: ocean, estuary, cliffs, cave, driftwood structures, bridge, tides permitting. Views from bluff for those who would prefer less walking. Bathrooms available on site.

**WEEK 5** **PEOPLE, PART 2: Motion / Mini Critique**

**MEET AT APPLEJACK’S BAR (in La Honda, CA, at intersection of the 84 and Entrada Way. Address: 8790 La Honda Rd, La Honda, CA, 94020).**

Materials: Bring all materials, and all previous work, along with any other work you would like to share!

**In class:** Mini critique on outside deck (surrounded by redwoods), painting either on deck or inside bar. Great lighting!

**Outside Assignments:** Do a repeat of this class on your own (or with a friend). Go to a place you feel comfortable (café, library, bar, restaurant, museum, etc), and do a quick, gestural painting on site. Resist the urge to “touch it up” later. Let it be a record of the moment.

**WEEK 6** **ANIMALS AND ARCHITECTURE** **MEET AT RED BARN, STANFORD**

Materials: Your choice.

**In class:** Your choice of location in and around the Red Barn. These paintings may be architectural, tonal, or mood-based, and may or may not involve horses.

**Outside Assignments:** None.

**WEEK 7** **MOOD: People, architecture and tone** **CHOICE OF LOCATION: CLASS DECISION. MEET AT EITHER SAN JOSE AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM (DOMESTIC) OR STANFORD MARINA.**

Materials: Your choice.

**In class:** Paintings should incorporate a sense of the environment as well as your reaction to it.

**Outside Assignment:** Paint anything metal, large or small, simple or complex, from life or photo. Find subtle variations in color, breaking them apart into distinct color shapes. Consider your lighting set up. Any size or materials.

**WEEK 8** **FINAL CRITIQUE** **LOCATION TBD**
BRING ALL PAINTINGS, AND ANY OUTSIDE WORK YOU WOULD LIKE THE CLASS TO CONSIDER. Okay to bring photos or work on computer or tablet.

MATERIALS:

PAINTING MATERIALS OF YOUR CHOICE, IN CONSULTATION WITH INSTRUCTOR.

OTHER: Sketchbook: **minimum size: 9” x 12”** (Must be bound on the side. Ok: spiral, hardbound, leather… Make sure you like it). Charcoal pencils (at least 2 each of: 2B, 4B, 6B), compressed charcoal, vine charcoal (big – the biggest you can find -- and skinny vine). Graphite pencils (2) (2B, B, regular commercial okay too). Kneaded eraser, white eraser. **Viewfinder:** I recommend buying the “ViewCatcher,” a grey plastic item that can fit in your pocket, and has pre-marked scale adjustments (although if you don’t have this, you can always use your hands). Available in art stores and on Amazon.

**Art Supply Stores** (Coupons and student discounts may be available for all, please ask):
Accent Arts, 392 California Avenue, Palo Alto. (More expensive)
University Art, 2550 El Camino Real, Redwood City. (More expensive)
Stanford Bookstore (basement) (more expensive)
Dick Blick. locations in San Francisco and Oakland. On-line supplies.
Michael’s. Coupons available online.
Amazon
Artist & Craftsman (stores in SF and Berkeley, and online).

**EVALUATION** (for those taking the class for a letter grade or for credit)
The grades will be based on completion and quality of in-class and outside assignments, individual progress, effort, and class participation/attendance. 25% Attendance; 25% In-Class Work (Effort/Participation/Focus/ Following Instructions); and 50% Outside projects (evaluation based on Process and Completion).

**ATTENDANCE** (for those taking the class for a letter grade or for credit)
Attendance is crucial in this class. Each class builds upon the previous one. Students will be responsible for all information presented in class – information will not be repeated. More than one absence will affect the student’s grade in a negative manner. Please come to class on time; being late two times will count as one absence.